

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

11/17/97  
1008 U.S. PTO  
Dear Sir:

**NEW APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

Transmitted herewith for filing is the [X] utility or [ ] design patent application of Inventors:

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Entitled: **COMPUTER-RELATED PRODUCT USER MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE SYSTEM**

Enclosed are:

1. The papers required for filing date under 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b):

40 pages of Specification

1 pages of Abstract

8 pages of Claims

28 sheets of [x] formal or [ ] informal drawings

2. [X] Combined Declaration/Power of Attorney

3. Assignment

[X] An assignment of the invention to: FUJITSU LIMITED

4. Claim for Priority Under 35 U.S.C. §120

[ ] The benefit under 35 U.S.C. §120 is hereby claimed from the following U.S. application(s):

U.S. Patent Application Serial No.

Filed:

5. Claim for Priority Under 35 U.S.C. §119

The benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 is hereby claimed from the following foreign applications:

Japanese Appln. No. 9-046008, filed February 28, 1997.

A certified copy of each of the above-identified foreign applications is enclosed.

6.  Information Disclosure Statement and PTO Form 1449.

Claim Calculation

		CLAIMS AS FILED				
	Originally Filed Claims	Highest Number Allowed		Present Extra		Additional Fee
Total Claims	15	20	=	0	X \$22	\$ 0.00
Independent Claims	6	03	=	3	X \$82	\$ 246.00
Basic Filing Fee:						\$ 790.00
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED:						\$ 1,036.00

Amendment canceling extra claims enclosed

Amendment deleting multiple dependencies enclosed

8. Small Entity Statement

A verified statement that this is a filing by a "small entity" under 37 C.F.R. §1.9 and §1.27 is attached.

Filing Fee Calculation (50% of above)

9. Fee Payment

Not enclosed

No filing fee is to be paid at this time.

Enclosed

Filing fee calculation above \$1,036.00

Recording Assignment (\$40.00; 37 C.F.R. §1.21(h)(1)) \$ 40.00

**TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED** \$1,076.00

10. Method of Payment of Fees

Check in the amount of \$1,076.00.

Charge Deposit Account No. 19-3935 in the amount of \$  
A duplicate of this transmittal letter is attached.

11. Authorization to Credit Overpayment or Charge Additional Fees

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit any overpayment, or charge fees under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 (filing fees) or 37 C.F.R. §1.17 (application processing fees) which may be required, to Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

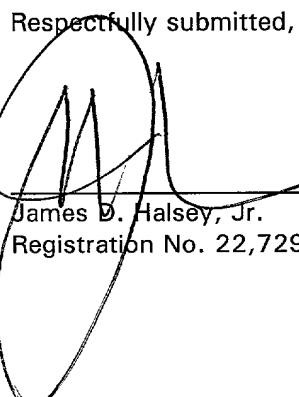
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APPLICATION FOR

UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

SPECIFICATION

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Title of the Invention: Computer-related Product User  
Management and Service System

**Computer-related Product User Management and Service System**

**Background of the Invention**

**5 Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates to the management of users of software of a computer, especially a personal computer, and hardware including peripherals, and to the services for users.

10 Computers, especially personal computers, have become very popular in various fields, and have been accompanied by an increasing demand for applicable software and peripherals. Especially, in the case of software, it is required to support users who have already purchased software by performing a debugging process, removing a failure, updating the version of the purchased software, etc. Thus, to recognize users who have already purchased specific computer-related products, user entries should be prepared and the demand of users for the services should be appropriately checked so that optimal services can be provided for the users and the vendors can acquire new business chances through their services.

**25 Description of the Related Art**

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Conventionally, a user registration for software and hardware as a computer-related product can be made by each user's returning by mail to a vendor a registration form attached to each product after 5 filling in the form. The postage may have to be paid by users.

In making a registration for a product by an online registration system, it is necessary to input required information in a format specified by each 10 vendor.

Furthermore, to check the using status of software, such as the number of times the software is started up, the conventional method is only to send users individual inquiries, thereby requiring a high 15 cost and a long time to check.

Thus, in the conventional user registration, a user has to input similar information each time he or she purchases a product. Therefore, the user is required to perform a difficult operation and send a 20 registration form, etc. whereas the merits and necessity of the individual information seem to be insignificant to the user. On the other hand, the vendor has to pay a cost required to, for example, input information hand-written by the user on the 25 registration form. This process also takes a long

time in processing user registration information into practically effective user registration information. There also has been an increasing cost with an increasing number of users.

5 Furthermore, the conventional method of checking the using status has the problem that it is costly and takes a long time, but is hard to appropriately use the check results for services. From the users' view points, the merits and necessity of their cooperation  
10 in answering inquiries are not clear to them.

#### **Summary of the Invention**

The present invention aims at performing by a user an easier operation to make a user registration  
15 for a computer-related product, realizing a real time registration, using by a vendor the user registration information and the using status information, reducing the cost and time required to check the using status of the product by a user, and appropriately providing  
20 a service for a user.

The computer-related product user management and service system includes a user information general management unit as the most important component, and, as necessary, a user registration/reference unit and  
25 a vendor registration/reference unit.

The user information general management unit is provided in, for example, a user registration centre for generally managing users of computer-related products, and generally manages the user registration information and the using status information transmitted from users. The user information general management unit manages the users of software and hardware which are computer-related products, and performs important functions in a system for providing the users with useful services.

The user registration/reference unit is, for example, a user registration/reference tool commonly used for software products, and is installed as part of a software product in a user computer as being separated from the body of the software product when the software product is installed. It notifies, for example, a user registration centre of the user registration information and using status information corresponding to a plurality of software products including the above described software product, and asks the user registration centre for new information relating to software products.

Furthermore, the vendor registration/reference unit is provided on a software or hardware vendor (manufacturer) side, obtains from the user information

general management unit the user registration information and the using status information transmitted from the users to the user registration centre, and notifies the user registration centre of new information about the computer-related products, thereby allowing the users to utilize the new information.

According to the present invention, when a user starts up a software product immediately after purchasing a computer, a using status monitor module determines that it is the first start up, and the user registration/reference unit transmits the user registration information to the user information general management unit for a new registration. Then a user registration is made. The contents of the user registration information can be referred to by the vendor registration/reference unit on the vendor side.

If the using status monitor determines that the number of times that the software product has been started up since the new registration has reached a given value predetermined by the vendor of the software product, then the number of the start up is transmitted as using status information from the user registration/reference unit to the user information general management unit, and the user information

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general management unit transmits the latest information about the software product to the user registration/reference unit. As a result, the user can obtain the latest information about the software product without any special process.

As described above, according to the present invention, the user can make a user registration in real time in a simple operation whereas the vendor can appropriately provide the user with the latest information about the computer-related product depending on the using status on the user side.

#### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the principle of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the configuration of the software user registration system;

FIG. 3 shows the process performed by the software user registration system shown in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 shows the user registration process system associated with a system configuration;

FIG. 5 shows the latest information reference system associated with the system configuration;

FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing the user

registration process;

FIG. 7 is a flowchart showing the latest information reference process;

5 FIG. 8 is a detailed flowchart showing the user registration process;

FIG. 9 is a detailed flowchart showing the latest information reference process;

10 FIG. 10 is a flowchart showing the tool updating process corresponding to the update of the version of the user registration/reference tool;

FIG. 11 shows the contents of the file storing personal information about users;

FIG. 12 shows the contents of the file storing software registration information;

15 FIG. 13 shows the contents of the file storing the information from a software vendor;

FIG. 14 shows the contents of the master database storing personal information about users;

20 FIG. 15 shows the contents of the master database storing software registration information;

FIG. 16 shows the contents of the master database storing the information from a software vendor;

FIG. 17 shows a start up screen of a software registration/reference tool;

25 FIG. 18 shows an input screen for software

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registration information;

FIG. 19 shows a check screen for software registration information;

5 FIG. 20 shows an input screen (1) for personal information about users;

FIG. 21 shows an input screen (2) for personal information about users;

FIG. 22 shows a check screen for personal information about users;

10 FIG. 23 shows a software registration starting screen;

FIG. 24 shows a screen for performing a process of software registration;

15 FIG. 25 shows a software registration completion screen;

FIG. 26 shows a latest software information acquisition starting screen;

FIG. 27 shows a screen in the process of acquiring the latest software information; and

20 FIG. 28 shows a latest software information acquisition completion screen.

#### Description of the Preferred Embodiments

25 FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the principle of the present invention. In detail, FIG. 1 is a

block diagram showing the principle of a computer-related product user management and service system, enabling an easy user registration of computer-related products and an easy check of the using status, and 5 providing a service according to user registration information and using status information.

In FIG. 1, a user information general management unit 1 is provided in, for example, a user registration centre for generally managing users of 10 computer-related products, and generally manages the user registration information and using status information transmitted from users. The user information general management unit 1 manages the users of software and hardware which are computer-related products, and performs important functions in 15 a system for providing the users with useful services.

A user registration/reference unit 2 is, for example, commonly used for software products, and is installed as part of a software product in a user 20 computer as being separated from the body of the software product when the software product is installed. It provides the user registration information and using status information corresponding to a plurality of software products including the 25 above described software product, and requests new

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information relating to software products to the user registration centre.

Furthermore, a vendor registration/reference unit 3 is provided on a software or hardware vendor 5 (manufacturer) side, obtains the user registration information and the using status information, transmitted from the user to the user information general management unit 1, and notifies the user information general management unit 1 of new 10 information about the computer-related products.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the configuration of the software user registration system as an embodiment of the computer-related product user management and service system. The present invention 15 is applicable not only to software but also to all computer-related product user management and service systems including hardware. Described below are embodiments of a user management and service system for handling software products which require user 20 entries much more than other computer-related products and require support services from vendors.

In the system shown in FIG. 2, a user 10 and a vendor 11 are connected to a user registration centre 13 through a network 12, for example, an Internet and 25 personal computer communications.

A user registration/reference tool 15 commonly used in registering plural sets of software 14a through 14c and a database 16 for storing personal information about each user and registration 5 information about software, etc. are provided on the user 10 side.

When the user 10 tries to install software A 14a first, the user registration/reference tool 15 incorporated into the software is installed separately 10 from the body of the software product, and is used for a registration for use of the software 14a. Using the user registration/reference tool 15, personal information about an individual user such as the name and the address of the user, etc. and software 15 registration information such as the serial number of the software, etc. are stored in a master database 17 in the user registration centre 13 through the network 12. The stored data is further stored in any of databases 18a through 18c for respective software 20 vendors.

From the user registration centre 13, for example, a user registration number uniquely assigned to each software code is provided for the user registration/reference tool 15 through the network 12, 25 and the registration information about the software

containing the provided contents and personal information about individual users are stored in the database 16 on the user side. The registration information containing a user registration number is 5 stored in the database 16 without starting another specific communications software, and the user can be informed of the stored data on, for example, the help screen.

A vendor registration/reference tool 19 is 10 provided on the vendor 11 side, and the vendor 11 refers to user personal/registration information stored in any of the databases 18a through 18c for each vendor using the vendor registration/reference tool 19, and notifies the user registration centre 13 15 of the latest information about software as information from the vendor so that the contents of the information can be stored in any of the databases 18a through 18c for each vendor.

When the frequency of use of specific software, 20 for example, the number of times of starting up, reaches a predetermined value, the user registration/reference tool 15 notifies the user registration centre 13 of the value through the automatically connected network 12. The frequency of 25 use is referred to by the vendor

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registration/reference tool 19. According to the notified frequency of use, the information from the vendor is transmitted as the latest information about the software from the user registration centre 13 to the user registration/reference tool 15 through the network 12. Thus, the user 10 can obtain the latest information about the software. When the frequency reaches a predetermined value, a message from the vendor is displayed to the user, and the user determines whether or not the using status data should be provided to the user registration centre. At a request from the user, the network is automatically connected and the using status data is transmitted.

FIG. 3 shows various processes performed between, for example, a personal computer (PC) on the user 10 side and, for example, a server on the user registration centre 13 side relating to the system shown in FIG. 2. In FIG. 3, there are the body of the software 14, the user registration/reference tool 15, and the database 16 on the user 10 side. The user registration/reference tool 15 is fundamentally common among a plurality of normal software products. For example, when a software product (SP1) is installed in a personal computer, the user registration/reference tool 15 is installed as

separated from the body of the software product so that it can be used in a user registration process for the software product SP1.

When a user registration is made for a different 5 software product (SP2), the user registration/reference tool 15 incorporated into the already installed software product (SP1) is invoked to be used in the user registration. However, the user registration/reference tool 15 is updated for a 10 new version corresponding to the changes in the representation for the operating system. If the user registration/reference tool 15 incorporated into the software product to be used in the user registration is a newer than the already installed version, then 15 the user registration/reference tool 15 is updated and a new tool is used.

The processes performed on the user 10 side are: a counter notification process 22 for notifying the user registration centre 13 of the number of times of 20 starting up as using status data according to the monitor result of a using status monitor module 21 for monitoring the number of times of starting up of software; a new registration process 23 for making a registration for use of new software; an information 25 reference process 24 for referring to the latest

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information provided from the vendor of the software product, about the software product which has already been registered for use, and is actually being used, that is, the information from the vendor in FIG. 2; 5 a registration change process 25 for changing the already registered contents; an additional registration process 26 for adding a new registration to new software; and a registration reference process 27 for referring to the already registered contents.

10 In these processes, the counter notification process 22, the new registration process 23, and the information reference process 24 are invoked by a start up module 20 inside the body of the software 14, receive software information such as the name of 15 the vendor of the software the name of the software, the version number, etc. through the using status monitor module 21 from the start up module 20, and performs the processes according to the software information, etc. When the process terminates, 20 termination information is returned to the start up module 20, and then the process of the body of the software is performed. The using status monitor module 21 makes the new registration process 23 perform when the number of times of starting up is 0, 25 makes the counter notification process 22 perform when

the number of times of starting up has reached the number of times a notification should be transmitted to the user registration centre 13, and makes the information reference process 24 perform when a number 5 of times, predetermined by the vendor of a software product, at which new information should be referred to, is reached.

The information reference process 24 can also be started by a call from a menu module 28. When the 10 user wants to receive the latest information about a software product, for example, the process starts with the user's click of the 'latest information' button on the menu. On the other hand, the registration change process 25, the additional registration process 15 26, and the registration reference process 27 are started only by the call from the menu module 28.

The processes of the functions for user 30 on the user registration centre 13 side are a counter notification process 33; a new registration process 20 34; an information reference process 35; a registration change process 36; and an additional registration process 37. The processes of the functions for vendor 31 on the user registration centre 13 side are a download process 38 and an 25 information registration process 39. Various

databases 32 in the user registration centre 13 correspond to the master database 17 shown in FIG. 2 and the databases 18a through 18c for each vendor.

Various processes of the functions for user 30 correspond to the identically named processes 5 performed by the user registration/reference tool 15, and are performed corresponding to the process performed on the user registration/reference tool 15 side, and the process results are returned to the user 10 side as necessary. For example, the new registration process 34 is performed according to the registration information transmitted as a result of the new registration process 23 on the user 10 side. The registration acknowledgement information 15 indicating the process result is returned to the user 10 side.

The download process 38 of the functions for vendor 31 classifies the user personal information and the software registration information transmitted from 20 the user 10 side for each vendor, and transmits the information to the vendor. The information registration process 39 stores the information from the vendor shown in FIG. 2, that is, the latest 25 information about the software product in the database 32. The registration reference process 27 on the user

10 side has no corresponding process on the user registration centre 13 side, but refers to the registered data about a software product, that is, the personal information, and the registration information 5 about the software, etc. stored in the database 16, on the user side.

FIGS. 4 and 5 show the software user registration system and the latest information reference system related to the system configuration. 10 FIG. 4 shows the new user registration system for a software product. In FIG. 4, as in FIG. 3, a personal computer PC (U) on the user side includes the software body 14, the user registration/reference tool 15, a user personal information file 51, a registration information file 52 about software, and a file 53 for 15 storing the latest information from the software vendor.

The user registration centre (RC) 13 includes a user information and using status data obtaining 20 module 45 and an information distribution module 46 as an internal configuration element; a master database 54 for storing user personal information; a master database 55 for storing software registration information; a master database 56 for storing the latest information about the software from the vendor; 25

and databases 57a through 57c for each vendor.

On the other hand, for example, a personal computer PC or a workstation WS (V) on the software product vendor 11 side includes the vendor registration/reference tool 19 containing a user information and using status data obtaining module 47 and an information registration module 48 as a component.

The procedure of the new registration process for the software product 14 is described by referring to FIG.4. When the software product 14 is started by the start up module 20, it is determined by the using status monitor module 21, for example, a number of times of starting up counter that the software product 14 is started for the first time. Then, a user registration tool invoking module 40 invokes the user registration/reference tool 15.

A user information registration and using status notification module 41 in the tool transmits personal information about a user and software registration information to the user information and using status data obtaining module 45 forming part of the server 44 in the user registration centre 13. The user personal information is stored in the master database 54, and the registration information about the

software is stored in the master database 55. The personal information about the user and the registration information about the software are distributed to a database corresponding to the 5 registered software vendor in the master databases 54 and 55 among the databases 57a through 57c for each software vendor.

When the information registration is completed, the server 44 notifies the user registration/reference 10 tool 15 of the termination result of the process. The termination result contains a user registration number for each software code as a part of the registration information about the software. The user registration number is uniquely assigned by the user registration 15 centre 13 in such a format that a software vendor can be identified. On the user 10 side, the personal information about a user used in the user registration is stored in the file 51, and the software registration information containing the user 20 registration number is stored in the file 52.

The user information and using status data 25 obtaining module 47 in the vendor registration/reference tool 19 on the software product vendor 11 side obtains personal information about a user and software registration information stored in

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the databases 57a through 57c for each vendor. The information registration module 48 transmits, as necessary, the latest information about a registered software product, that is, the information from the 5 software vendor to the user registration centre 13, and the vendor information is stored in the master database 56, and stored in any of the databases 57a through 57c for each software vendor.

In FIG. 4, the user registration/reference tool 10 15 is invoked from the user registration tool invoking module 40 through the call from the menu module 28 inside the body of the software product 14 on the user 10 side, and the user registration process is performed when the registration change process 25 or 15 the additional registration process 26 described by referring to FIG. 3 is performed. The registration process in this case is performed similarly to the new registration process.

FIG. 5 shows the latest information reference 20 system for software. In FIG. 5, when the body of a software product 14 is started by the start up module 20 in the software 14 on the user 10 side, the using status monitor module 21, for example, a number of times of starting up counter determines the number of 25 times of starting up of the software. If it

determines that the number of times, at which the latest information about the software should be referred to, preliminarily specified by the vendor, has been reached, then the user registration tool 5 invoking module 40 invokes the user registration/reference tool 15, and an information obtaining and reference module 42 in the user registration/reference tool 15 requests the information distributing module 46 of the server 44 10 in the user registration centre 13 to distribute information from the software provider.

In response to the request, the information distributing module 46 extracts information from a database for each software provider, for example, 15 database 57a through the master database 55 for storing software registration information, and the master database 56 for storing information from a vendor or provider, transmits the extraction result to the information obtaining and reference module 42 20 on the user 10 side. The information is displayed to the user 10, and stored in the information file 53 for storing the information from the software vendor or provider. Thus, even if the number of times of software starting up, at which the latest information 25 should be referred to, has not reached the software

vendor-specified number of times, the user, for example, can instruct the user registration tool invoking module 40 to invoke the user registration/reference tool 15 through a call from the 5 menu module 25, thereby the process of obtaining the latest information is performed.

FIGs. 6 and 7 are flowcharts showing the user registration process and the latest information reference process corresponding to FIGs. 4 and 5. 10 When the process starts in the user registration process flowchart shown in FIG. 6, the body of the software product 14 is first started in step S1. In step S2, the number of times of starting up of the software product is counted. In step S3, it is 15 determined whether or not the software product has already been registered. If it has already been registered, control is passed to the flowchart of the latest information reference process of FIG. 7.

If the registration has not been made for the 20 started software product, a registration/reference tool is started in step S4. In step S5, the personal information about users and the registration information for the software are input. The input of the information is described later by referring to an 25 example of a screen.

Then, in step S6, a communications module is started, and the user personal information and the software registration information are transmitted from the user to the registration centre.

5 On the user registration centre side, the user personal information and the software registration information are received in step S7. In step S8, a user registration number is assigned corresponding to the software, for example, a software code. After  
10 sending the result to the user, the software registration information including the user registration number and the user personal information are respectively stored in the databases 55 and 54 in step S9.

15 On the user side, the user registration number is received in step S6, and the software registration information including the reception result and the user personal information are respectively stored in the files 52 and 51.

20 On the other hand, the vendor is informed from the registration centre that new information has been registered. In step S12, a registration/reference tool is started. In step S13, the vendor starts a communications module, and requests the registration  
25 centre to transmit newly registered information. The

registration centre distributes the contents of the master database 54 for storing the user personal information and the master database 55 for storing the software registration information to the database for each vendor in step S11, and transmits the distributed results to the vendor. The vendor receives the result in step S13, and stores the contents in the memory not shown in FIG. 6.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart showing the latest information reference process performed when it is determined that the registration for the software product started in step S3 shown in FIG. 6 has already been made. Described below by referring to FIG. 5 is the case in which the user registration tool invoking module 40 is called by the using status monitor module 21, not by the menu module 25, and the user registration/reference tool is then invoked.

First in step S21, it is determined whether or not the number of times of starting up is equal to the value preliminarily specified by the software vendor as the number of times of starting up at which the latest information should be referred to. If the number of times of starting up is not equal to the specified value, then control is passed to the process of the module of the body of the software, and the

latest information reference process is not performed.

If it is determined that the number of times of starting up is equal to the specified value, then the user registration/reference tool is started in step 5 S23, and providing of the latest information is requested to the registration centre using the contents of the file 52 for storing the registration information about the software.

The registration centre transmits an information 10 extraction instruction together with the information extraction condition to the master database 56 for storing the information from the vendor in step S24. The extracted information is transmitted to the user 15 side in step S25, and the transmitted information is displayed in step S26. The display of the information is described later by referring to an example of a screen.

The information extraction conditions referred 20 to in this embodiment are a software code, a serial number, using status data, that is, a number of times of starting up, information type related to, for example, user's experience in using a software product, a related software product code to be used in combination, a display period during which the 25 latest information is displayed.

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On the vendor side, the registration/reference tool is started in step S27. In step S28, the communications module is started and the latest information is transmitted to the registration centre.

5 On the registration centre side, the information is stored in the master database 56 through the database for each software vendor and transmitted to the user corresponding to the extraction condition in step S29.

The program for realizing the process of each step in the above described flowchart is stored in the memory, not shown in FIG. 4, of the user registration centre (RC) 13, the user personal computer PC (U) 10, a personal computer or workstation PC/WS (V) 11, and is executed to perform various processes shown in FIG.

10 15 3.

FIG. 8 is a detailed flowchart showing the user registration process. Unlike the flowchart in FIG. 6, the information reference step is not taken, but a normal process is performed as an application in step S14 when it is determined that the software of the application started in step S3 has already been registered.

20 25 Furthermore, step S5 shown in FIG. 6 is divided into step S5a in which user personal information and software registration information are input and step

S5b in which input information is edited. Of the edited input information, a personal authentication identification number is stored in the user personal information file 51, and a software name is stored in 5 the registration information file 52.

As the first half of the communications module start up transmitting/receiving process in step S6 shown in FIG. 6, the user/software information transmitting process is performed in step S6a as shown 10 in FIG. 8. On the registration centre side, the reception of the registration process is awaited in step S16 after initializing the centre process in step S15, and vendor information stored in the vendor information master DB 56 is assigned when a user 15 registration number is assigned in step S8 as in step S6.

In FIG. 8, the registration completion information transmitting process is performed in step S17 after the process in step S8. After the 20 registration completion information is transmitted to the user, data is stored in the master DB in step S9 as shown in FIG. 6. The user personal information is stored in the user personal information master DB 54, and the software registration information is stored 25 in the registration information master DB 55.

The registration completion information transmitted from the registration centre side is received on the user side in the registration completion information receiving process in step S6a, 5 and the contents are stored on a disk in step S10 as in FIG. 6. Files to be stored are the user personal information file 51, the registration information file 52, and the software vendor information file 53.

FIG. 9 is a further detailed flowchart showing 10 the latest information reference process. In FIG. 9, the process in which a registration/reference tool is invoked from the menu module 28 is described.

As shown in FIG. 8, an application is started on 15 the user side in step S31, and the number of times of starting up is counted in step S32. Then, in step S33, it is determined whether or not a registration/reference tool has been started from the menu module in step S33. If not, a normal process is performed as an application in step S34.

If the start up is performed from a menu module, 20 the registration/reference tool is started in step S23 as shown in FIG. 7, and the user personal information, the software registration information are read in step S35. The information is read, as necessary, from the 25 user personal information file 51, the registration

information file 52, and the software vendor information file 53. The read user personal information and software registration information are transmitted to the registration centre in the transmitting process in step S36.

On the registration centre side, the latest information reference process is awaited in step S38 after the centre process initialization in step S37. When a latest software information reference request is received in the process of receiving the user personal information from the user side and the software registration information in step S39, the user personal information and the software registration information respectively stored in user personal information master DB 54 and the registration information master DB 55 are read, and it is determined in step S41 whether or not the reference requesting user is an authenticated user of the software to be referenced. If yes, the vendor information is read from the vendor information master DB 56 in step S42, and it is determined in step S43 whether or not the information is the latest information. If yes, the latest information is transmitted to the user side in the latest information transmitting process in step S44.

If it is determined in step S41 that the reference requesting user is not an authenticated user, then an error notification is transmitted to the user side in step S45. If it is determined in step 5 S43 that the information is not the latest information, the user is informed that no latest information exists.

The latest information, an error notification, etc. are received on the user side in the receiving 10 process in step S46. For example, the latest information is stored in the software vendor information file 53 as necessary in step S47, thereby terminating the process.

FIG. 10 is a flowchart showing the tool updating 15 process corresponding to the update of the version of the user registration/reference tool. According to the present embodiment, the user registration/reference tool mainly comprises the user information registration and using status notification 20 module 41 and the information obtaining and reference module 42 as shown in FIG. 4. The above described modules are hereinafter referred to as add-in tool main programs. In addition to the add-in tool main program, the user registration/reference tool 25 comprises an add-in tool related file and a

registration information related file. According to the present embodiment, the add-in tool related file corresponds to a network access point file.

The flowchart shown in FIG. 10 is based on, for 5 example, marketed software, that is, an application, installed on the personal computer on the user side. In this case, the user registration/reference tool, that is, an add-in tool, is contained in the directory of an application immediately after the installation. 10 In the personal computer on the user side, an add-in tool being operated exists in the system directory of the personal computer.

When the process starts in FIG. 10, the add-in tool main program corresponding to newly purchased 15 software is read in step S51. In step S52, it is determined whether or not the system directory of the personal computer contains an add-in tool. If not, it indicates that the user registration/reference tool, that is, the add-in tool, is first installed in 20 the personal computer. As a result, the add-in tool main program is moved into the directory in step S57, thereby terminating the process.

If it is determined in step S52 that an add-in tool exists in the system directory of the personal 25 computer, then the existing add-in tool main program

and a related file is read in step S53, and the versions are compared with each other in step S54. If the add-in tool existing in the system directory is older, then the add-in tool main program is 5 replaced with the new version of the related file in step S55. If the resultant contents are new or equal, then control is passed to step S53 without performing the process in step S55.

The processes in steps S53 through S55 are 10 performed on all add-in tools existing in the system directory of the personal computer. After the processes have been completed on all add-in tools, control is passed from step S53 to step S56, and the add-in tool main program contained in the directory 15 of the application and the related files are removed, thereby terminating the process.

FIGs. 11 through 13 show the contents of the files provided on the user 10 side shown in FIG. 4. FIG. 11 shows the contents of the file 51 for storing 20 the user personal information. The user personal information as the contents of the file is stored in the file 51 by user's inputting when a software product is registered for use. When another software is registered for use, the contents are used for the 25 registration, thereby preventing the user from re-

inputting the same contents.

FIG. 12 shows the contents of the file 52 for storing software registration information. In the stored contents, a software code is represented by 5 coding the name of a software product and a version level. A serial number corresponds to a production number, and is assigned to each software code by the software vendor. When a software is registered for use, the serial number of software, purchased by a 10 user, is unknown to the vendor, and the user has to input the serial number as part of registration information.

A user registration number is assigned for each software code on the user registration centre 13 side 15 as described above. Simultaneously, a number is assigned in a format in which the software vendor product can be identified. Using status data is a number of times of starting up of the software product according to the present embodiment.

20 A requested information type is specified by a user when a software product is registered, and indicates the type of the latest information requested by the user. For example, a type A refers to enhancement information about new product information, 25 version-up information, etc. A type B refers to

information about products for use in combination among the products of the same vendor, information about convenient functions. A type C refers to linkage information used when a software product is 5 linked with another vendor software product and hardware product.

FIG. 13 shows the contents of the file 53 for storing the information from a software vendor. The contents are the latest information transmitted from 10 the user registration centre 13 in response to the request from the user, and includes a user registration number assigned for each software code.

FIGs. 14 through 16 show the contents of the master databases 54 through 56 provided in the user registration centre 13 shown in FIG. 4. FIG. 14 shows 15 the contents of the master database 54 for storing the user personal information. The master database 54 stores the contents of the user personal information file 51 for storing the personal information about the user shown in FIG. 11, and the user registration number assigned in the user registration centre 13.

FIG. 15 shows the contents of the master database 55 for storing the software registration information. The registration information as the contents shown in 20 FIG. 15 are similar to those described above.

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Additionally, the database stores the number of times the user has obtained the information about the software product.

FIG. 16 shows the contents of the master database 56 for storing the information from the vendor. In FIG. 16, the start and the end of the display indicate the display period under the information extraction condition, that is, the effective display period of the vendor information. The related software code is 10 one of the extraction condition, and is provided by another vendor corresponding to the above described information type C.

FIGs. 17 through 25 show examples of the screens displayed during the process performed on the user 15 side shown in the user registration process flowchart of the software product shown in FIG. 6. FIG. 17 shows a screen indicating the starting up of the software registration/reference tool. On the screens, the user selects any of new registration, change of 20 registration, and obtaining the latest information using a mouse. The 'NAME OF FORM' indicating the contents of the screen process refers to one screen.

FIG. 18 shows an input screen of the software registration information. In FIG. 18, the information 25 received from the body of the software, that is, the

name of the vendor (provider), the name of the software, a version number, etc. are displayed. The information not obtained from the body of the software, that is, the serial number in this example, 5 is input by the user.

FIG. 19 shows the software registration information check screen. In this example, the registration information obtained from the body of the software and the information input by the user can be 10 checked.

FIGS. 20 and 21 show an input screen of user information, that is, the personal information about the user. In FIG. 20, the user specifies a person or a corporation, and inputs the name of the specified 15 person or corporation. In FIG. 21, a post code, an address, a telephone number, etc. are input.

FIG. 22 shows the check screen of the user information, that is, the personal information about a user. The input personal information is checked.

FIG. 23 shows the registration starting screen. When the user makes a registration, communications start to make an online registration by setting 20 communications environment, or pushing a dial illustrated button in the drawing. When the cancel 25 button is pushed, no registration is made. Thus,

according to the present embodiment, no registration is made when the user does not request the registration. That is, the registration is made only at the request of the user. When the user does not 5 request the registration, that is, cancels the registration, an indication to recommend the registration process is displayed when the software product is started from the next time on.

FIG. 24 shows the screen of the communications 10 in process, that is, the screen on which the online registration is performed. As described in the remarks column, the process meter indicates to what extent the communications have proceeded from the initialization of the port to the disconnection of the 15 line.

FIG. 25 shows an example of the screen informing 20 that the user registration has been completed, and the user registration number is displayed in the window. The remarks column indicates the amount of information as registration information.

FIGs. 26 through 28 show an example of the screen on the user side in the latest information reference process shown in FIG. 7. In this case, the registration/reference tool is started in step S23 25 shown in FIG. 7, the screen showing the start up of

the registration/reference tool shown in FIG. 17 is displayed, and 'obtaining latest information' is selected by clicking the mouse. Thus, the screen on which the latest information obtaining process is checked is displayed as shown in FIG. 26. In FIG. 26, cancel is acceptable. If the user does not request the latest information, the information is not referred to and the recommendation of the reference process is displayed from the next process on.

FIG. 27 shows the screen displaying the communications process being performed. On this screen, the process meter indicates to what extent the communications have proceeded from the initialization of the port to the disconnection of the line.

FIG. 28 shows an example of the screen informing that the latest information has been obtained. The screen displays the latest information, that is, the latest information from the vendor. When the termination button is pressed, the latest information reference process terminates. The remarks column indicates the amount of the latest information.

In the explanation above, the user management and service system is described by referring to a software product in computer-related products. However, the present invention is not limited to the software

product, but can be applied to a user management and service for hardware including peripherals. Furthermore, among the processes performed by the system, the new registration process and the latest 5 information reference process are described in explaining the operations of the system. However, the types of the processes and the aspects of the processes are not limited to the descriptions of the preferred embodiments above. That is, various 10 processes can be performed in various formats.

As described in detail above, the user can make user registration for a computer-related product in a simple procedure and receive various after-services from a vendor on an online network without delay. The 15 computer-related products vendor can easily acquire the using status information of a product at a low cost, and reduce a cost for user registration and user services. Furthermore, various information services can be provided for each user and therefore attract 20 a large number of users. Additionally, value-added business can be realized through user registration information, thereby contributing a lot to the development of the entire computer industry.

**What is claimed is:**

1. A computer-related product user management and service system which manages a user of software and hardware as a computer-related product, and provides the user with an appropriate service, comprising:  
5 user information general management means, provided on a system manager side, for generally managing user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user of the computer-related product ; and  
10 user registration/reference means, provided on a user side of the computer-related product, for notifying said user information general management means of the user registration information and the using status information at a request of the user who receives a service according to the user registration information and the using status information.  
15  
20 2. The system according to claim 2, wherein said user registration/reference means requests at a request from the user said user information general management means to provide new information about the computer-related product from a vendor side of the computer-related product.  
25

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein  
said computer-related product is a software  
product, and said user registration/reference means  
is commonly provided for, and as part of, each of a  
5 plurality of software products; and

when any software product of the plurality of the products is installed, the user registration/reference means as part of the any software product are also installed; and thereafter said user registration/reference means issues a notification about the user registration information and using status information for the plurality of software products which are included in the software products, and realizes a request for new information about the software product.

4. The system according to claim 2, wherein  
said user registration information comprises:  
personal information about each user containing  
20 an identification number of each user; and  
registration information containing a type of  
information requested by the user about a computer-  
related product; and  
said user information general management means  
25 extracts the new information depending on information

extraction condition containing a requested information type in the registration information at a request for new information about a computer-related product from said user registration/reference means, 5 and transmits the new information to said user registration/reference means.

5. The system according to claim 2, wherein  
10 said computer-related product is a software product and said using status information contains the number of times of starting up of the software product; and

15 said user information general management means transmits new information about the software product to said user registration/reference means depending on notified contents about the number of times of starting up of the software product.

20 6. The system according to claim 2, wherein  
said computer-related product is a software product and said using status information contains the number of times of starting up of the software product; and

25 said user registration/reference means requests  
said user information general management means to

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provide new information about the software product when the number of times of starting up of the software product has reached a value predetermined for a software product.

5

7. The system according to claim 2, further comprising on a vendor side of said computer-related product:

10 vendor registration/reference means for obtaining the user registration information and the using status information provided for said user information general management means, and notifying said user information general management means of new information about the computer-related product.

15

8. The system according to claim 7, wherein said user registration information contains a type of information requested by a user about a computer-related product;

20 said vendor registration/reference means specifies a type of new information when the new information about the computer-related product is notified of; and

25 said user information general management means compares the type of information requested by the user

with the type specified by the vendor registration/reference means, and when both types coincide, transmits the new information to said user registration/reference means at a request from said user registration/reference means.

9. The system according to claim 8, wherein one type of said information refers to information about a linking operation with a computer-related product provided by another vendor.

10. A management apparatus which manages user information about a computer-related product provided by a user terminal connected through a network, comprising:

user information general management means for managing using status information provided by the user terminal about a product owned by a user;

20 product information management means for managing product information provided by a vendor of the computer-related product; and

product information notification means for referring to a product owned by each user managed by said user information general management means at a product information reference request from the user

terminal, and for providing product information managed by said product information management means about a product owned by a user.

5 11. A computer-readable storage medium used to direct a computer to perform the functions of:

managing using status information provided by the user terminal about a product owned by a user;

10 managing product information provided by the computer-related product vendor; and

15 referring to a product owned by each user managed by said using status information managing function at a product information reference request from the user terminal, and providing product information managed by said product information managing function about a product owned by a user.

12. A user terminal apparatus, provided at a user side of a computer-related product, for receiving an appropriate service from a vendor, comprising:

20 user information notification means for notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information about the computer-related product; and

25 product information reference means for

00000000000000000000000000000000

requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product from a computer-related product vendor.

5       13. A computer-readable storage medium used to direct a computer to perform the functions of:

          notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information about the computer-related product; and

10       requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product from a computer-related product vendor.

14. A vendor terminal apparatus, provided at a vendor side of a computer-related product, for providing an appropriate service for a user, comprising:

15       user information reference means for obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user of the computer-related product; and

20       product information notification means for notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product.

25       15. A computer-readable storage medium used to direct

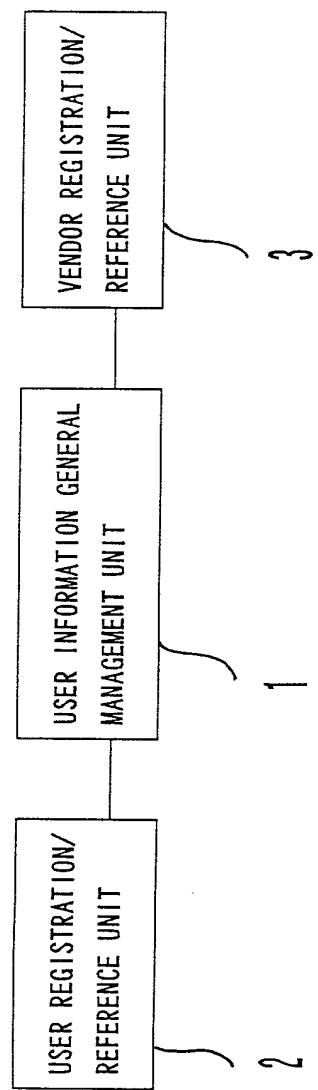
a computer to perform the functions of:

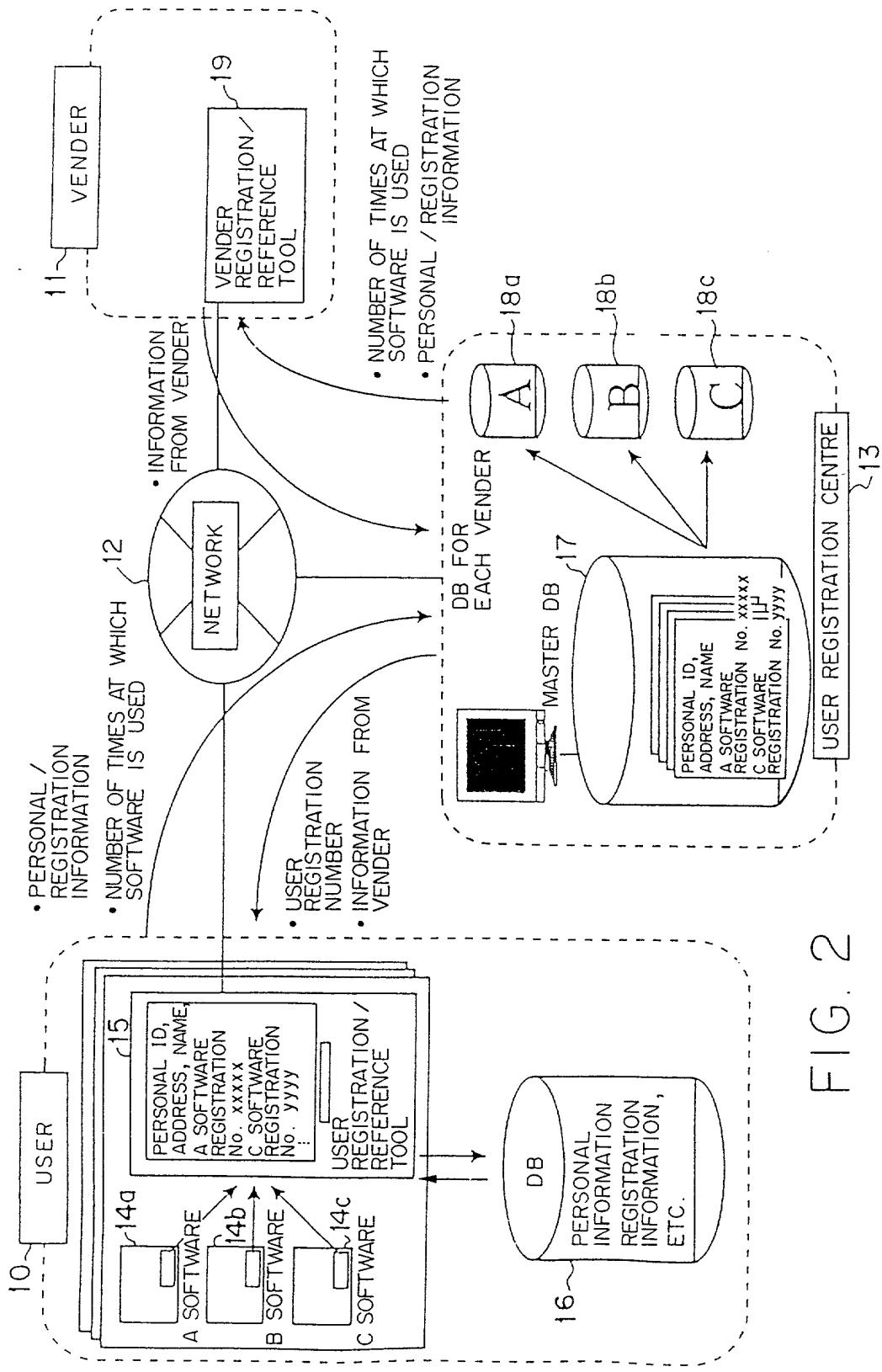
obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information and using status information transmitted from a user of the computer-related product; and

5 notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product.

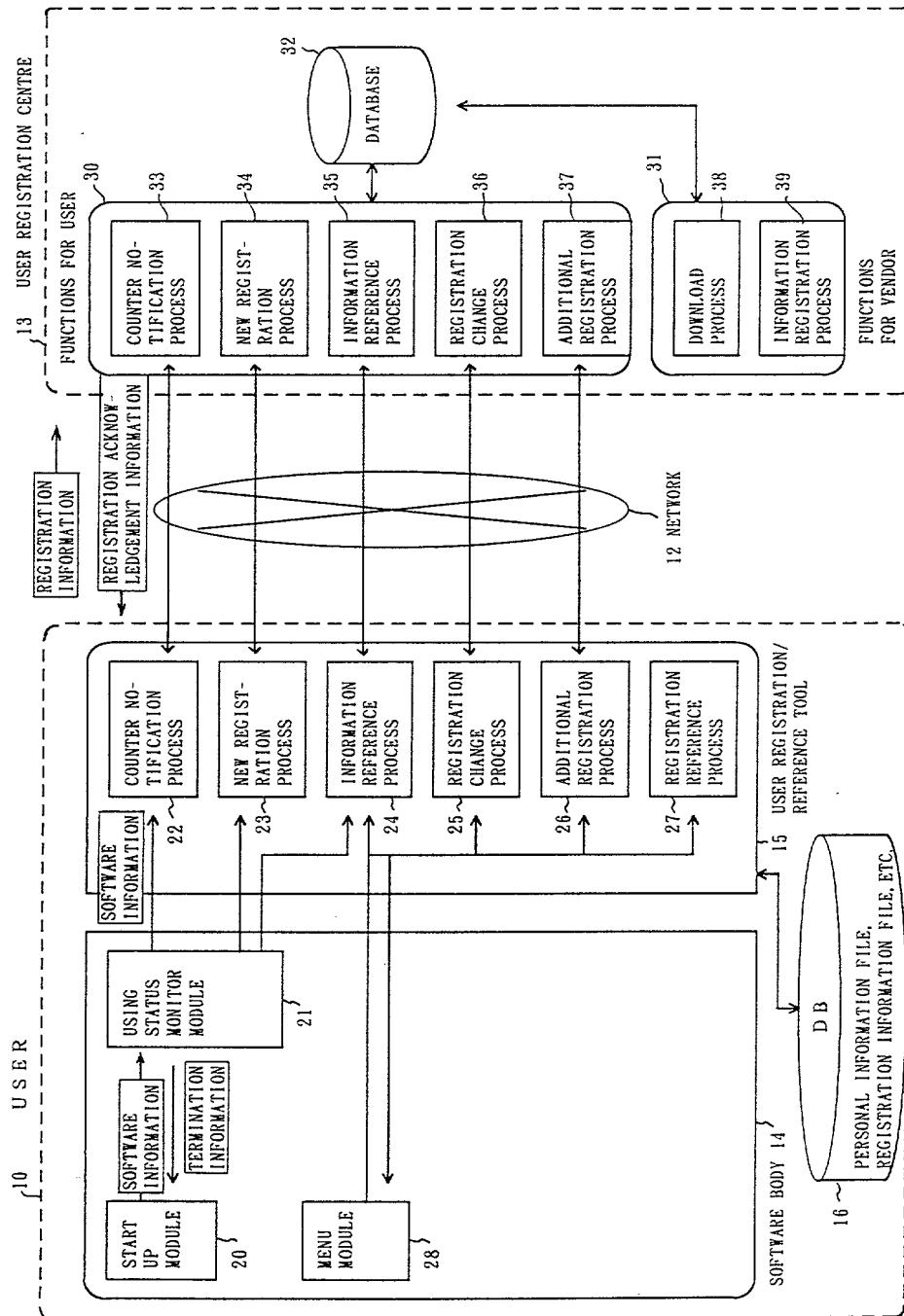
**Abstract of the Disclosure**

A user information general management unit for generally managing user registration information and 5 using status information transmitted from a user side of a computer-related product is provided at a system manager side, for example, a user registration centre. A user registration/reference unit for notifying the user information general management unit of the user 10 registration information and the using status information at a request from the user, and for requesting new information provided from a vendor side about a computer-related product is provided on a user side. With this configuration, a user registration 15 operation can be simple on the user side, the time and the cost required in checking the using status on the vendor side can be reduced, and an appropriate service for a user can be realized.





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E I G. 3

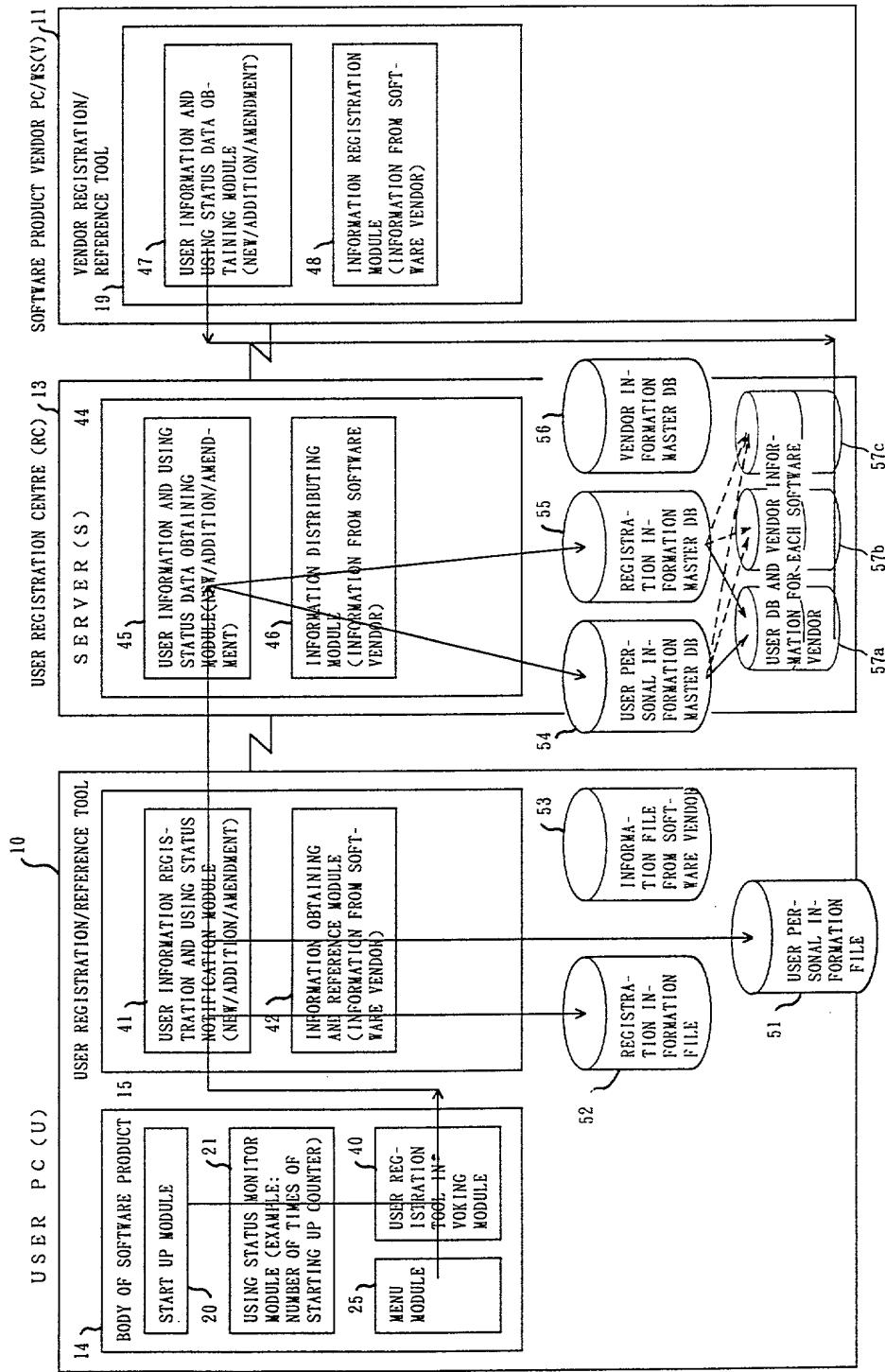


FIG. 4

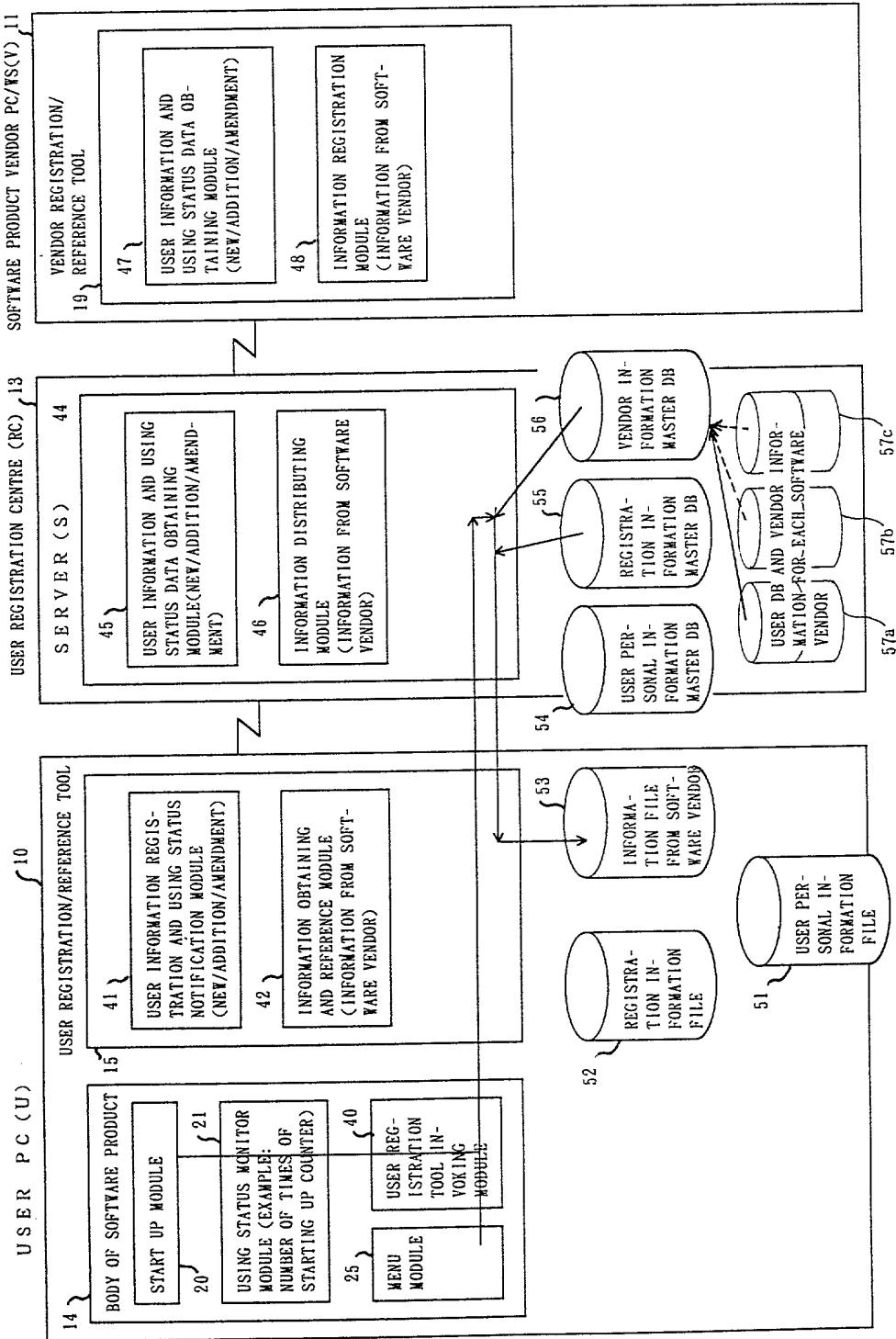


FIG. 5

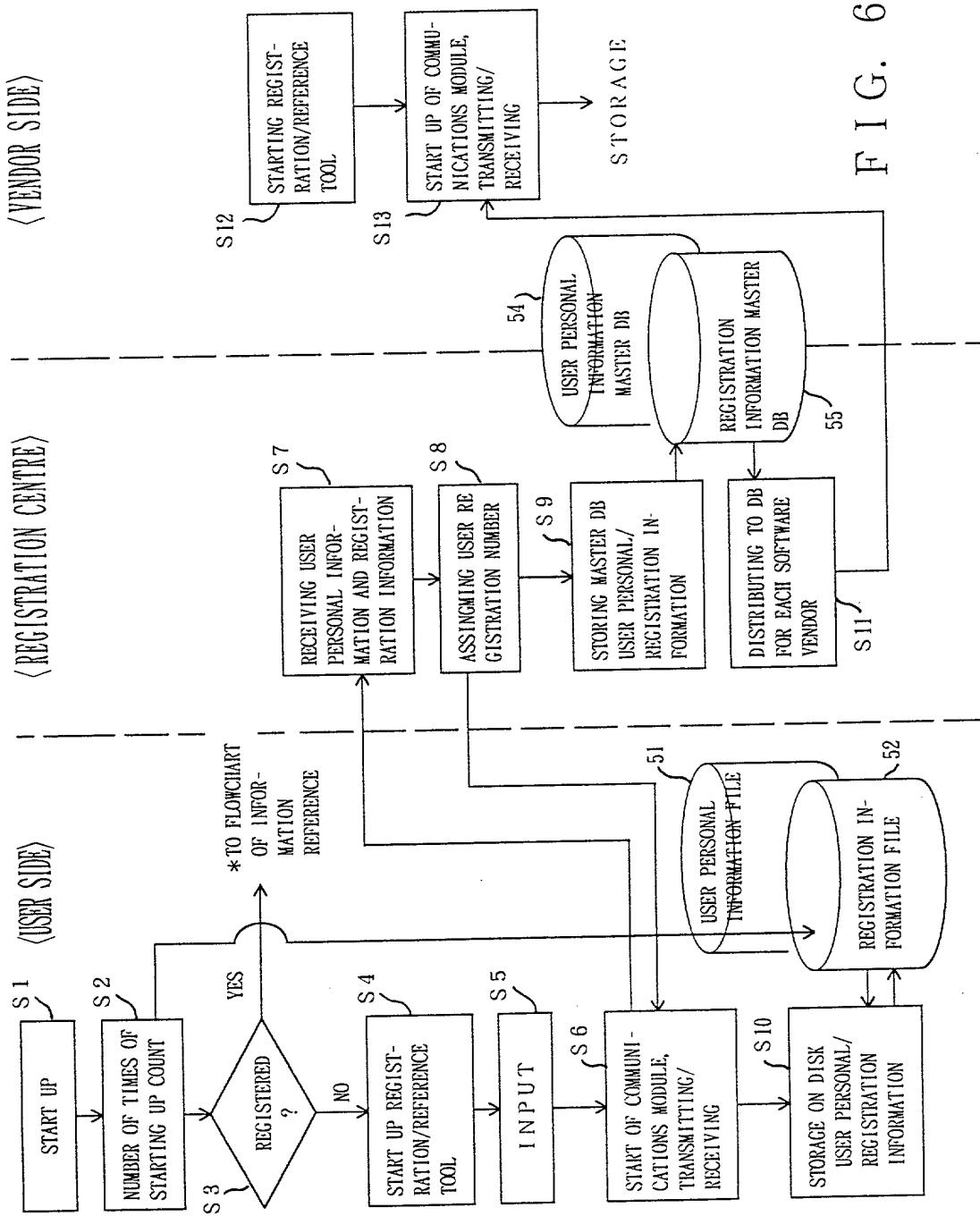


FIG. 6

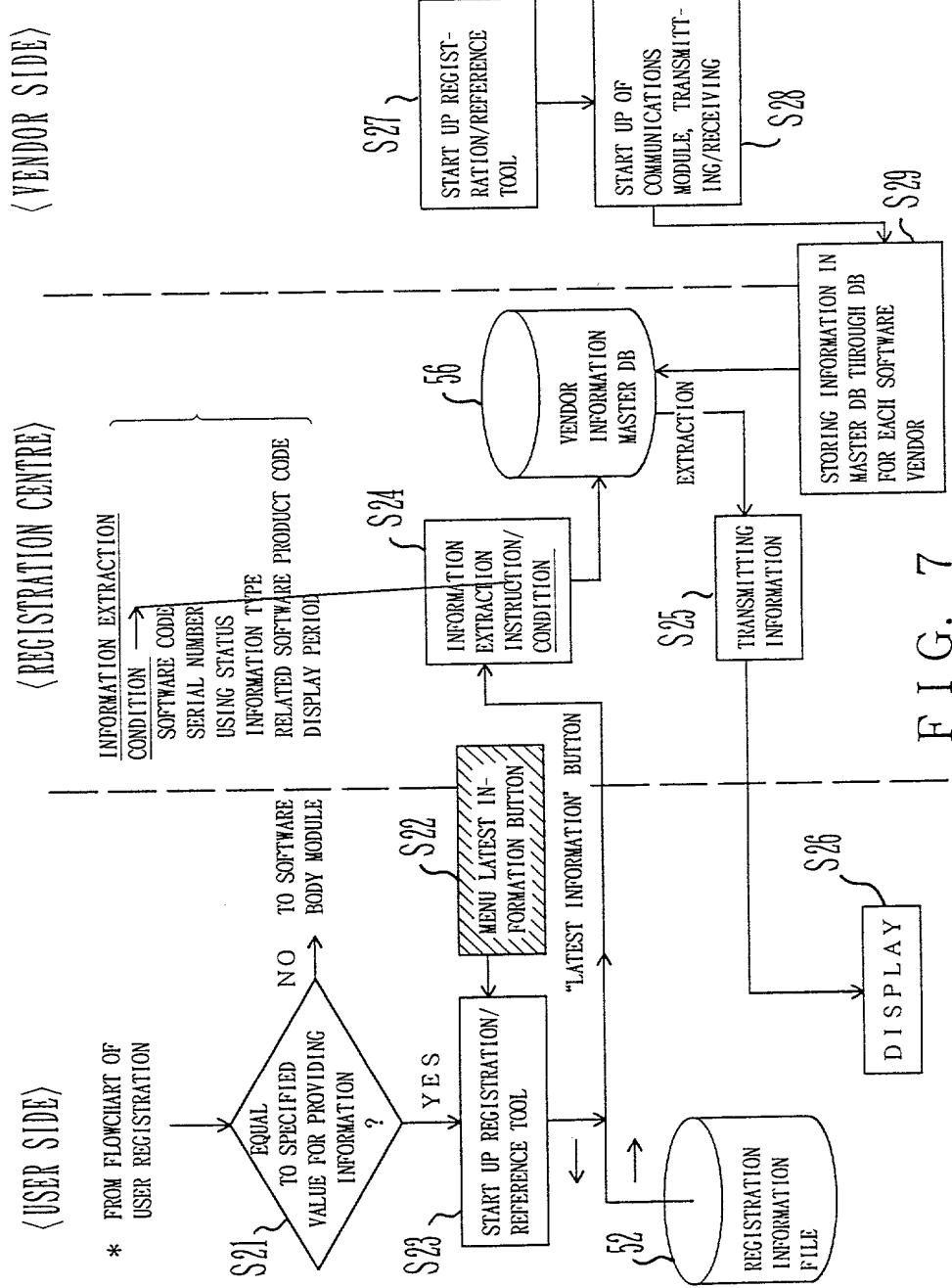
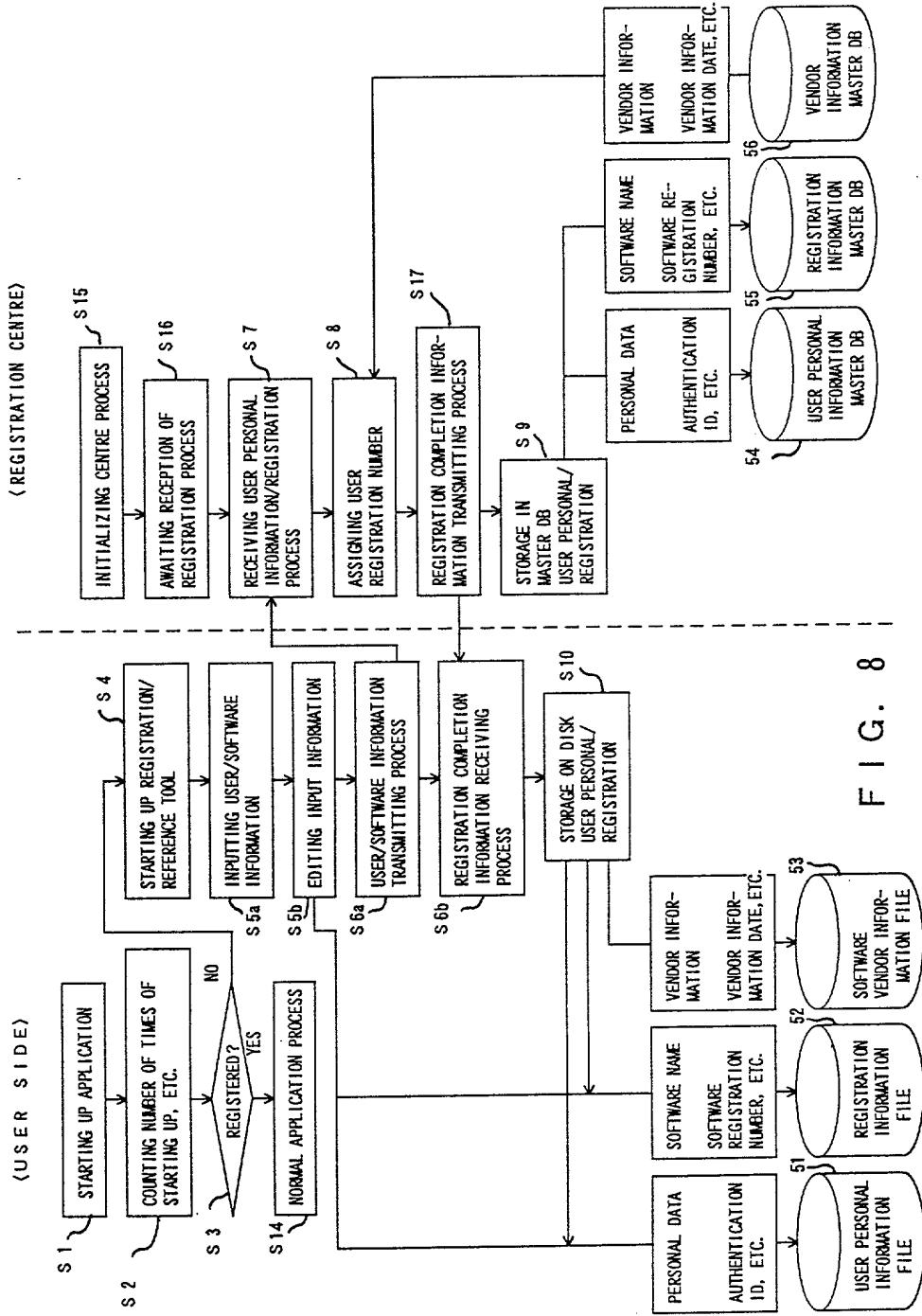
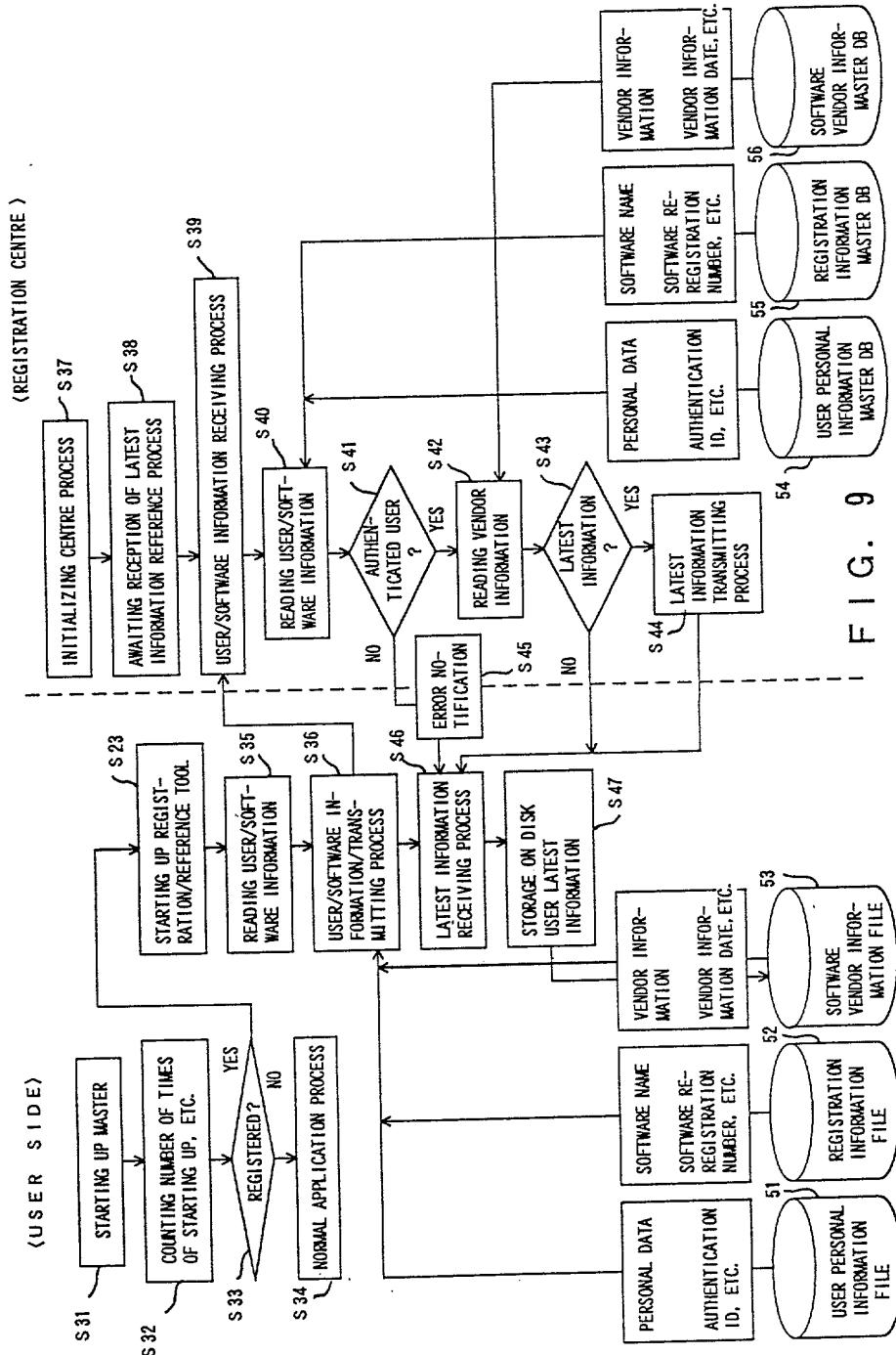


FIG. 7





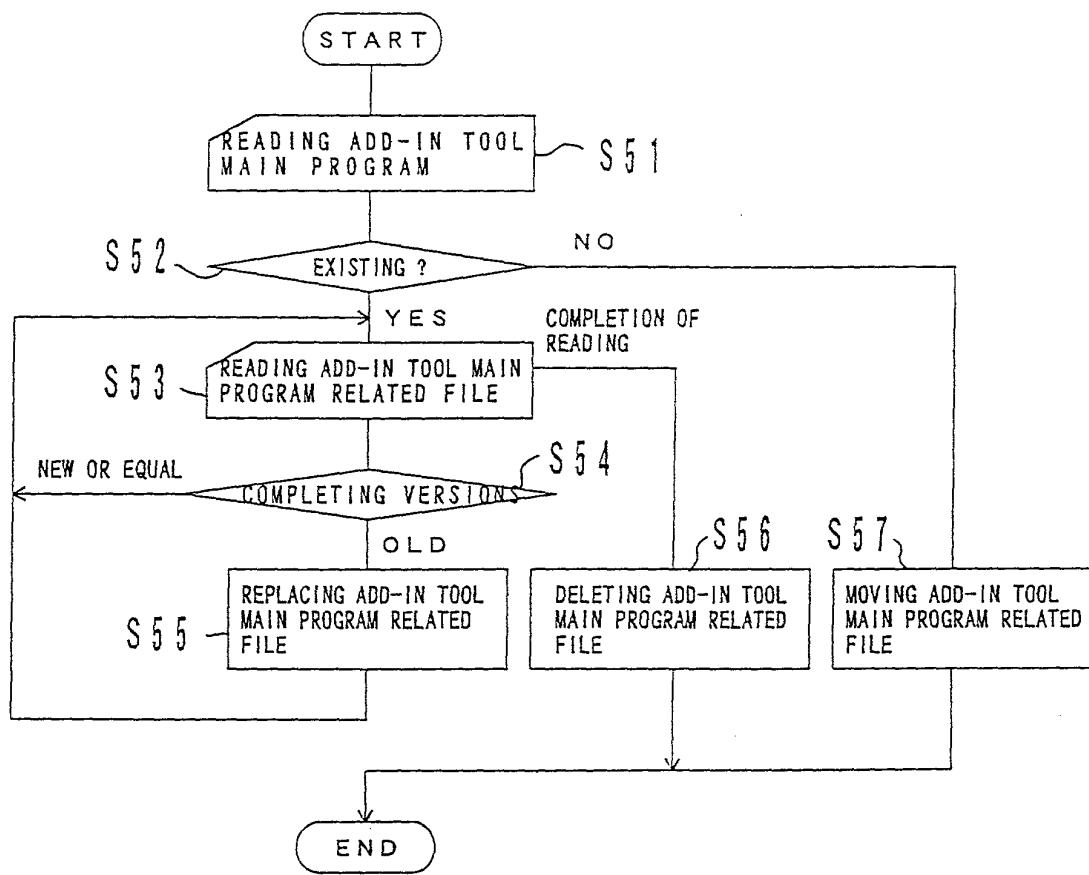


FIG. 10

PERSONAL AUTHENTICATION ID	PASSWORD	NAME	READING	POST CODE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	E - MAIL	CORPORATION/ PERSON	GENDER	BIRTHDAY
HHHXX001	*****	HANAKO EBISU	HANAKO EBISU	150	SHIBUYA, TOKYO...	03-		PERSON	F	1965.02.04

F I G . 1 1

SOFTWARE CODE	SERIAL NUMBER	USER REGISTRATION NUMBER	REGISTRATION DATE	USING STATUS	REQUESTED INFORMATION TYPE
V0002121	256-7652429	XXXXXXXXXX	1996.12.10	35	A
M0123221	H2B423345	XXXXXXXXXX	1996.12.10	21	
ZZ014144	RT-54422	XXXXXXXXXX	1996.12.30	5	A, B, C

SOFTWARE CODE	USER REGISTRATION NUMBER	OBTAINED ON	INFORMATION	INFORMATION TYPE
V0002121	XXXXXXXXXX	1997.01.31	INFORMATION ABOUT VERSION-UP OF OO	A
M0123221	XXXXXXXXXX	1996.12.10	INFORMATION ABOUT NEW PRODUCT OF XX COMPANY	A
ZZ014144	XXXXXXXXXX	1997.01.31	INFORMATION ON ABOUT SEMINAR OF ZZ LINKAGE WITH VV	C

F I G . 1 3

PERSONAL AUTHENTICATION ID	PASSWORD	NAME	READING	POST CODE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL	CORPORATION/PERSON	GENDER	BIRTHDAY	USER REGISTRATION NUMBER
HHHXXX01	*****	HANAKO EBISU	HANAKO EBISU	150	SHIBUYA, TOKYO...	03-		PERSON	F	1965.02.04	XXXXXXXXXX

SOFTWARE CODE	PERSONAL AUTHENTICATION ID	USER REGISTRATION NUMBER	SERIAL NUMBER	REGISTRATION DATE	USING STATUS	REQUESTED INFORMATION TYPE	NUMBER OF TIMES OF OBTAINING INFORMATION
V0002121	HHHXXXX001	XXXXXXXXXX	256-7652429	19961204	35	A	5
H0051011	KKKKXXX002	XXX1XXXXX1	MM670-FG7J2	19961204	1		0
0PQ11111	PPPXXXX004	XXX1XXXXX2	382637409	19961204	10	A, B, C	1

SOFTWARE CODE	REGISTRATION DATE	START OF DISPLAY	END OF DISPLAY	SERIAL NUMBER	USING STATUS	INFORMATION TYPE	RELATED SOFTWARE CODE	INFORMATION
V0002121	19970204	19970205	19970531			A		INFORMATION ABOUT VERSION-UP OF OOO
M0123221	19970204	19970204	19977204			A		INFORMATION ABOUT NEW PRODUCT OF XX COMPANY
ZZ014144	19961230	19961230	19961230		<10	C	VV735624	INFORMATION ABOUT SEMINAR OF ZZ LINK-AGE WITH VV
SDF39211	19961230	19961230	19961230	451201< ,<451300		A		URGENT INFORMATION ABOUT DELIVERED PRODUCTS INFECTED WITH VIRUS!

INFORMATION EXTRACTION CONDITIONS

F I G . 1 6

No.	SCREEN IMAGE	CONTENTS OF SCREEN PROCESSES							
		NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN					
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>X</td> </tr> </table>	SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	<p>“OOO” USER REGISTRATION SCREEN</p> <p>IMAGE GRAPHICS (PRSS LOGO)</p>	ICON	<p>“OOO” USER REGISTRATION SCREEN (OOO IS SOFTWARE NAME)</p> <p>PROCESS PERFORMED BY TOOL IS INDICATED ON SCREEN DISPLAYING START UP OF REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL</p>	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DESCRIPTION</td> <td>DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW</td> </tr> </table>	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW			<p>“OOO” IS NEWLY REGISTERED/REGISTRATION- CHANGED/OBTAINING LATEST INFORMATION. THIS PROCESS IS PERFORMED USING COMPANY OR DOMESTIC TELEPHONE LINE. WHEN PROCESS IS PERFORMED, VARIOUS SUPPORTS CAN BE PROVIDED FROM VENDOR.</p>			
DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW								
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT</td> <td>FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS</td> </tr> </table>	DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT	FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS			<p>TO NEXT STEP</p>	<p>TO NEXT STEP</p>		
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT	FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS								
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMAGE GRAPHICS</li> <li>SCREEN SIZE 320*240 dot(48007WP*36007WP)</li> </ul>				
					REMARKS				

FIG. 17

NAME OF FORM			
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/REFERENCE - TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X
INPUT OF SOFTWARE REGISTRATION INFORMATION	ICON		
DESCRIPTION			
• VENDOR NAME : _____	IMAGE		
• SOFTWARE NAME : _____	GRAPHICS		
• VERSION No. : _____	(SOFTWARE)		
• SERIAL No. : _____			
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT	TO NEXT STEP		
FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	TO NEXT STEP		
REMARKS	• INFORMATION NOT PROVIDED BY SOFTWARE IS INPUT HERE • IMAGE GRAPHICS (IMAGE OF SOFTWARE)		

FIG. 18

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		CHECKING REGISTRATION INFORMATION OF "OOO"	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/REFERENCE - TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS	NOTIFICATION FROM SOFTWARE AND INFORMATION INPUT BY USER ARE CHECKED.	DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW	CHECK INFORMATION JUST INPUT. IF CORRECT, GO TO NEXT STEP.
CHECKING SOFTWARE REGISTRATION INFORMATION	ICON	DESCRIPTION		FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	AMENDMENT/TO NEXT STEP
		<p>VENDER NAME : _____</p> <p>SOFTWARE NAME : _____</p> <p>VERSION No. : _____</p> <p>SERIAL No. : _____</p>		<input type="button" value="AMEND-&lt;br/&gt;MENT"/> <input type="button" value="TO NEXT&lt;br/&gt;STEP"/>	REMARKS
		DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT			

FIG. 19

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		INPUT 1 OF USER INFORMATION	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL		<input type="checkbox"/>	X		
INPUT 1 OF USER INFORMATION		ICON			
DESCRIPTION					
REGISTRATION TYPE : <input type="radio"/> PERSON <input type="radio"/> CORPORATION		NAME OF CORPORATION : _____		READING : _____	
NAME OF PERSON : _____		NAME OF PERSON : _____		READING : _____	
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT		TO NEXT STEP		NEXT STEP	
DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW		FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS		TO NEXT STEP	
DESCRIPTION ON WHICH PERSONAL INFORMATION IS INPUT WHEN THIS TOOL IS FIRST USED (REGISTRATION TYPE/ NAME, ETC.)					
USER PERSONAL INFORMATION INPUT HERE (TELEPHONE NUMBER, ETC.) IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR SUPPORT HERE-AFTER. PLEASE INPUT NECESSARY ITEMS.					
REMARKS				.	

FIG. 20

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		INPUT 2 OF USER INFORMATION													
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">INPUT 2 OF USER INFORMATION</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">ICON</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">DESCRIPTION</td> </tr> </table>		SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INPUT 2 OF USER INFORMATION			ICON			DESCRIPTION			<p>DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS</p> <p>SCREEN ON WHICH USER INFORMATION (ADDRESS, ETC.) IS INPUT. (CONTINUED FROM SCREEN ABOVE)</p>		<p>SCREEN ON WHICH USER INFORMATION (ADDRESS, ETC.) IS INPUT. (CONTINUED FROM SCREEN ABOVE)</p>	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>															
INPUT 2 OF USER INFORMATION																	
ICON																	
DESCRIPTION																	
<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POST CODE : _____</li> <li>• ADDRESS : _____</li> <li>• TELEPHONE NUMBER : _____</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>RETURN</td> <td>TO NEXT STEP</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT</td> </tr> </table>		DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POST CODE : _____</li> <li>• ADDRESS : _____</li> <li>• TELEPHONE NUMBER : _____</li> </ul>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>RETURN</td> <td>TO NEXT STEP</td> </tr> </table>		RETURN	TO NEXT STEP	DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT		<p>USER PERSONAL INFORMATION INPUT HERE (TELEPHONE NUMBER, ETC.) IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR SUPPORT HEREAFTER. PLEASE INPUT NECESSARY ITEMS.</p>		<p>FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS</p> <p>RETURN/TO NEXT STEP</p>			
DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• POST CODE : _____</li> <li>• ADDRESS : _____</li> <li>• TELEPHONE NUMBER : _____</li> </ul>																	
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>RETURN</td> <td>TO NEXT STEP</td> </tr> </table>		RETURN	TO NEXT STEP														
RETURN	TO NEXT STEP																
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT																	
				REMARKS													

FIG. 21

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		CHECKING USER INFORMATION	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION / REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
CHECKING USER INFORMATION	ICON				
DESCRIPTION					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>REGISTRATION : <input checked="" type="radio"/> PERSON <input type="radio"/> CORPORATION</li> <li>NAME OF CORPORATION :</li> <li>ADDRESS, ETC.</li> </ul>	DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AMENDMENT</li> </ul>	FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AMENDMENT/TO NEXT STEP	
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT	REMARKS				

FIG. 22

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		LET'S START REGISTRATION	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS	EXPLANATORY SCREEN ON WHICH ONLINE REGISTRATION IS MADE USING TELEPHONE LINE
LET'S START REGISTRATION!	ICON			DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW	ALL INFORMATION HAS BEEN INPUT. MAKE USER REGISTRATION. WHEN USER REGISTRATION IS COMPLETED, LATEST INFORMATION SUCH AS INFORMATION ABOUT SOFTWARE VERSION-UP, AND VARIOUS SUPPORT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.
DESCRIPTION				FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	CANCEL/SET COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT/DIAL ILLUSTRATED BUTTON
IMAGE GRAPHICS (DIAL)				REMARKS	• FOR CANCEL, SUBSEQUENT PROCESSES ARE PERFORMED. •
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT					

FIG. 23

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		COMMUNICATING	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X		
COMMUNICATING					
DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS					SCREEN ON WHICH ONLINE REGISTRATION IS MADE
DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW					DESCRIPTION OF YOUR INFORMATION (SOFTWARE INFORMATION/PERSONAL INFORMATION) IS BEING REGISTERED. WAIT A MOMENT.
DIALING!					
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT					
SUSPEND					
FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS					SUSPEND
REMARKS					• PROCESS METER (INITIALIZING PORT/INITIALIZING MODEM/DIAL /COMMUNICATIONS/DISCONNECTION OF LINE)

FIG. 24

NAME OF FORM		NAME OF FORM	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION / - REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	TITLE OF SCREEN	INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLETION OF SOFTWARE USER REGISTRATION
INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLETION OF SOFTWARE REGISTRATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS	NOTIFICATION ABOUT COMPLETION OF SOFT- WARE USER REGISTRATION, AND DISPLAY OF INFORMATION FROM VENDOR.
DESCRIPTION		DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW	SOFTWARE USER REGISTRATION IS COMPLE- ED WITH RECEIPTION NUMBER 000. YOUR USER REGISTRATION NUMBER IS 000. IT IS REQUIRED AT INQUIRY, ETC. PLEASE MEMORIZE IT. ALSO REFER TO DISPLAY OF REGISTRATION INFORMATION OF HELP MENU.
DISPLAY OF INFORMATION FROM VENDOR	△ ▽	TERMI- NATION	FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT		TERMINATION	REMARKS
			40 DIGITS * 60 ROWS

FIG. 25

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		LET'S OBTAIN LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION/ - REFERENCE TOOL		ICON		SCREEN ON WHICH LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION OBTAINING PROCESS IS CHECKED	
LET'S OBTAIN LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION! ICON				DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS	SCREEN ON WHICH LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION OBTAINING PROCESS IS CHECKED
DESCRIPTION				DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW	PROCESS OF OBTAINING SOFTWARE LATEST INFORMATION IS STARTED.
IMAGE GRAPHICS (DIAL)				FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	CANCEL/SET COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT/DIAL ILLUSTRATED BUTTON
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT		CANCEL	SET	REMARKS	• FOR CANCEL, SUBSEQUENT PROCESSES ARE PERFORMED. •

FIG. 26

FIG. 27

NAME OF FORM		TITLE OF SCREEN		INFORMATION ABOUT LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION	
SOFTWARE REGISTRATION / - REFERENCE TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS CONTENTS	INFORMATION THAT LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION HAS BEEN OBTAINED.
INFORMATION ABOUT LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION	ICON			DESCRIPTION OF WINDOW	LATEST SOFTWARE INFORMATION HAS BEEN OBTAINED WITH RECEPTION NUMBER ○○○ IT IS REQUIRED AT INQUIRY, ETC. PLEASE MEMORIZE IT.
DESCRIPTION					
DISPLAY OF INFORMATION FROM VENDOR			△ ▽		
DESCRIPTION OF MOUSE POINT				FUNCTIONS OF BUTTONS	TERMINATION
				REMARKS	40 DIGITS * 60 ROWS
				TERM I - NATION	

FIG. 28

## COMBINED DECLARATION/POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR UTILITY/DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name. I believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled Computer-related Product User Management and Service System.

the specification of which (check one)  is attached hereto  I was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as U.S. Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_ and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in §1.56. I hereby claim foreign priority benefit(s) under 35 U.S.C. §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

## Prior Foreign Application(s)

09-046008	Japan	28th/February/1997	Priority Claimed
(Number)	(Country)	Day/Month/Year Filed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	Day/Month/Year Filed	

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §120 of any U.S. application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application(s) in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status: patented, pending, abandoned)
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

## POWER OF ATTORNEY:

As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorneys and agent: James D. Halsey, Jr., 22,729; Harry John Staas, 22,010; David M. Pitcher, 25,908; John C. Garvey, 28,607; J. Randall Beckers, 30,358; James H. Marsh, Jr., 24,533; William F. Herbert, 31,024; Richard A. Gollhofer, 31,106; Mark J. Henry, 36,162; Paul F. Daebeler, 35,852; Gene H. Garner II, 34,172; Ilene D. Altman, 36,371; Michael D. Stein, 37,240; Paul I. Kravetz, 35,230; Gerald P. Joyce, III, 37,648; Todd E. Marlette, 35,269; Michael Lau, 39,479; Beverly A. Pawlikowski, 36,404; John P. Kong, 40,054 and William H. Schertler, 35,348 (agent) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. Send correspondence to: STAAS & HALSEY, 700 Eleventh Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C., 20001, and direct telephone calls to: (202) 434-1500

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. §1001, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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## COMBINED DECLARATION/POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR UTILITY/DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION

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Full name of fifth joint inventor, if any		
Inventor's Signature		Date
Residence		
Post Office Address		
Full name sixth joint inventor, if any		
Inventor's Signature		Date
Residence		
Post Office Address		
Full name of seventh joint inventor, if any		
Inventor's Signature		Date
Residence		
Post Office Address		
Full name eighth joint inventor, if any		
Inventor's Signature		Date
Residence		
Post Office Address		